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MERCURY.

FROM SIGMOND'S LECTURES ON THE MATERIA MEDICA.

[Continued from page 139.]

QUICKSILVER has been employed to some extent in this country in its crude state, as a remedial agent. It appears that in the days of Charles the Second it was much employed. Amongst the old writers, whose quaint and curious volumes serve to enliven the research into medical literature, are Dr. Daniel Turner's "Treatise on Diseases of the Skin, and the Ancient Physicians' Legacy impartially Surveyed." The doctor is one of those agreeable gossips who retail every anecdote that comes in their way. He discusses learnedly every subject. He is earnest upon every point, from the Arabian leprosy to the red nose of Queen Anne, that can be called cutaneous; and upon quicksilver he is more than usually facetious; he thus says—"In King Charles the Second's reign, I very well remember, though it is above fifty years past, a physician knighted by that prince, whose name I can sometimes recollect, though not at this moment, encouraged it much, who lived retired somewhere about Edmonton, and where the villagers round coming to consult him, especially on their children's diseases, he advised a thimbleful of quicksilver, to be given them every morning for a month; and when careful to observe them in their needings, they would oftentimes recover the same, which being washed served for the next dose." That this curious advice for obtaining again the quicksilver, after passing through the intestines, and again employing it, was not unusual, we learn from the tradition that has been handed down to us. The beauties of the court of King Charles the Second, used the crude mercury as an alterative; and it was common, morning and evening, to take a teaspoonful, to beautify the complexion, to remove a freckle, or to give a pearly lustre to the skin. It was not unusual, and I almost blush whilst I relate the fact, to find globules of quicksilver scattered about after a dance; and it is said that the sweepings of the withdrawing-room were amongst the profitable perquisites of the fair Abigails, who, the following morning, administered to the ladies the second-hand mercury thus collected, again to pass through the delicate frames of those celebrated beauties whom the pencil of Sir Peter Lely and the pen of Grammont have handed down to posterity.

My old friend Turner says, "I have heard a pleasant story of a mercurial lady, who, in dancing at a public assembly, happened to let go

some particles of the quicksilver she had taken in the morning, which shining on the floor, in the midst of so great an illumination, like so many brilliants, there were several stooping down to take them up, but finding themselves deceived, it afforded matter for much laughter among the gentlemen, and blushing among the ladies, especially she that was much concerned; for the cry went through the room that some lady had scattered her diamonds."

There are many laughable tales of the rapidity with which quicksilver comes away after it has been swallowed, narrated by Daniel Turner; for, in his day, Dr. Dover had attempted to introduce the practice of administering it in enormous doses. Mr. Bradley gives us the history of the case of an old gentleman who took an ounce of quicksilver for nine months, daily, without doing him either good or harm; and that out of sixteen pounds he had taken in the whole, washing it from the fæces, when they weighed it, there wanted only one ounce and a half, which he thinks was lost in the washing. Dr. Turner, in his comments upon the case, observes—"that this old gentleman (for he was upwards of three score) must have been stronger in the sphincter than many much younger persons I have met with, some of whom acquaint me it comes away in spite of their teeth;" and he then proceeds to give some laughable narratives. Crude quicksilver thus taken has produced salivation, ulceration of the gums, and likewise tremors, which, from the description given of them, resemble very much those I have already alluded to, as consequent upon the employment of the metal in any occupation of life.

The controversy between the admirers of Dr. Dover's practice, and his opponents, who stigmatized him as an impudent quack, was carried on with all that acrimony and venom which so frequently have disfigured medical writings; and at last the public mind was satisfied that the frightful doses of this metal were destructive, but not before some tragical events had occurred. Dr. Dover had very strongly recommended mercury in a treatise which he wrote on fever. Amongst those who read his work was one of the most celebrated actors of this country, Barton Booth, who has left behind him a reputation of the highest class, as one of the most accomplished tragedians of his age; he had just recovered from an intermittent fever, by the use of cinchona; it had completely left him for ten or twelve days, but apprehensive of its return, he sent for Dr. Dover, who encouraged him to take the crude mercury, assuring him that it would not only prevent the return of his fever, but effectually cure him of all his complaints. On the following day, May 3d, he began the course, and by May the 8th, he had taken two pounds, except two ounces; he then complained of pain in his head and bowels, a universal uneasiness of his body, so that he could not remain one moment in the same posture. The following day Sir Hans Sloane was called in, nine ounces of blood were taken from him; purgatives and enemas were administered the two following days, but the bowels would not act, nor could the costiveness be in any way relieved, and in the course of the second day he died. It appeared that before the 8th about half a pound weight of the metal had been passed,

but after that day none had been discharged. The body was opened in the presence of Sir Hans Sloane; a gall-stone was found in the ductus choledochus, which choked up the passage, but the other parts were sound, until the lower intestines were examined. The rectum, which was so "rotten that it broke like tinder," and gave forth a most offensive cadaverous stench, with the other intestines, was ripped open with a pair of scissors; the whole track on the inside was lined with crude mercury divided in globules, about the bigness of pins' heads, and they were perfectly black. Mr. Booth had long labored under an obstinate jaundice, for which he had tried many remedies; and rhubarb, of which he daily chewed about three drachms, and which procured him eighteen or twenty stools a day, had afforded him great relief; but this attack, together with an intermittent fever, had come on about a month before his death. The termination of this case made a great impression on the public mind, and banished from general practice such an abuse of what is a valuable remedy if well administered.

In all the forms in which mercury is exhibited, it requires care and caution; but where it is combined with the powerful acids, as is the case in corrosive sublimate and calomel, it becomes a most dangerous tool in the hands of the ignorant or half-educated man. Pills, containing simple metallic mercury, have been long employed, and, properly managed, a mild and gently active medicine is the result. Our old Pharmacopœias contain various recipes for the pilulæ mercuriales; they consisted of crude quicksilver made into pills, with honey, crumb of bread, and other simple ingredients. The College has adopted confection of red roses and liquorice; the weak acid that is in the confection may cause an oxidation of the mineral; but altogether the preparation is a valuable one. Two drachms of the mercury are triturated with three drachms of the confection, until the globules of quicksilver have disappeared, and then a drachm of powdered liquorice is added, and the whole mass is beaten until a complete incorporation takes place. Minute division of the mineral is thus effected, and one grain of mercury is contained in three of the mass. It sometimes happens that sulphuric acid has been added to the conserve of roses to increase its color, and hence the pill has contained some portion of the deleterious sulphate of mercury. This pill has been long much celebrated under the name of blue pill, and is one of the most popular remedies of the day, in the dose of four or five grains. Its high estimation it chiefly owes to the work of the late Mr. Abernethy, entitled, "Surgical Observations on the Constitutional Origin and Treatment of Local Diseases," and likewise to the practice which he pursued, and the precepts he inculcated amongst a large proportion of the students of medicine, who are now in the full zenith of their honorable career. I must, therefore, dwell for a short time upon the opinions of an individual upon points which are intimately connected with the subject of our present examination.

Few individuals who have adorned our profession, possessed a more clear and accurate knowledge of the principles of our science than Mr. Abernethy, and no one ever explained them with greater simplicity, or with less of the entanglement of barbarous and uncouth names; he was,

to the highest degree, plain, and, therefore, thoroughly intelligible. He had none of the deep learning and research of his two cotemporaries, Dr. Young and Dr. Mason Good, but he was infinitely their superior in the explanation of his views, for he did not, as they have done, encumber his writings with the hard and unintelligible phrases of the Greeks, nor did he attempt to establish systems founded upon artificial arrangements. He watched the powers of Nature, he recalled the surgeon to the path of physic, he showed to him the effect of local disorders upon the constitution, and the reciprocal operation of constitutional disorders upon local diseases; he pointed out that the digestive organs may be affected by local disorder, and that upon the due function of these organs the health of man mainly depends. His object was "to excite, by means of medicine, a more copious and healthy secretion." The passages beginning from the sixty-fifth page of the third edition, commencing, "It is a principal object of medicine to give strength and tranquillity to the system at large," to the passages in which he enters upon the utility of mercury, contain golden precepts, which, as in the days of antiquity, should be engraved on a tablet and suspended in the Temple of Health, for every man to read, remember and obey. They form a code for individual well-being, and that the author should triumphantly bid those who sought from his dispensations relief from their sufferings, to read them, was sufficient evidence that they were the result of mature reflection, of honest conviction, and of thorough reliance upon the soundness of the views which time and practice had not changed.

It was a singular circumstance that whilst this good and amiable man was occupied in inculcating the necessity of strict attention to the digestive organs, and to their excretions, another highly practical man was employed upon the same object; and that from the infirmary of Edinburgh Dr. Hamilton was teaching how valuable, in the treatment of disease, was alvine evacuation. Whilst, however, this distinguished physician was instructing that this should be done with energy and quickness, in the acute diseases we are called upon to treat, the cautious and sagacious surgeon was employed in demonstrating it should be effected, in local and in chronic diseases, by slower and more gradual operations. The combined views of these enlightened men have tended to improve the treatment of disorders, and have given hints for the preservation of health and the prolongation of life. To the knowledge of the necessity of great attention to the excretions, may chiefly be attributed the increased longevity of man, and his freedom from many of the diseases of former days.

Mr. Abernethy's mode of pursuing his mercurial course was cautious and regular. He prescribed only small doses, taking care that the error so often fallen into, of increasing the quantity, when any benefit was perceptible, should be avoided. Nothing can be more injudicious than the augmentation of the quantity of this medicine without sufficient reason. In small doses the biliary secretion is corrected, and the digestive organs are placed in a healthier condition; larger quantities exert an influence on the whole constitution, and alter the state of the nervous system; thus controlling disease dependent upon an irritable and dis-

turbed state of the nervous function; but, in still larger quantities, it never fails to irritate and weaken the system, and thus to derange the digestive organs. Five grains of blue pill, taken at night, will not irritate the bowels, but, generally speaking, three are sufficient, and may be continued for some days; occasionally the mouth becomes affected, with a very few nights' repetition of the dose, but this often depends upon the badness of the blue pill, for a very small quantity of sulphuric acid, in the conserve of the roses, will materially affect the preparation, and produce very bad consequences. It happens that whilst the secretions from the liver are materially improved, as the excretions testify, dyspeptic symptoms supervene; in such cases the blue pill is to be discontinued, and again had recourse to at a future time. Calomel, in a very small quantity, will often be the source of high irritation, where blue pill is indicated, but, as I shall have occasion to state to you, the powers of calomel, when properly administered, are essentially necessary to be trusted to.

The functions of the skin are often impaired in consequence of disordered state of the digestive system, and these are restored to their wonted state by this remedy; the operations of the mind are enfeebled from similar causes; hence hypochondriasis, disorders of the nervous system, and hysteria, are controllable by the same means. Enlargement of the absorbent glands, malignant tumors, and ulcerated sores, are relieved and cured, when they are connected with such disorders of the digestive organs as are remedied by the therapeutic agent which I have considered. Every system of practice is not only likely to be too much extolled, but it is also liable to be followed with too sanguine expectations, and to be pushed to a greater extent than the original founder intended, and doubtless this has been the case with the blue pill. It is capable of producing much mischief; its abuse is as formidable a cause of disease as its proper employment is certain of being a source of health. It is not any one plan, or any one particular remedy that can be relied on, in all the complicated maladies of our nature; but there are unerring principles which are to guide us in our practice; there are certain effects produced upon the human economy by certain agents, and a knowledge of the influence of each must teach us not to circumscribe our list of remedies, nor to place undue reliance upon any drug, however powerful it may prove. From want of such a reflection the blue pill has been too often indiscriminately employed, and has become the source of mischief, as I shall have occasion to state to you.

[To be continued.]

CASE OF CROUP.

[Reference was made in the Journal, a few weeks since, to a dissertation on Croup, by Dr. J. H. Wright, of Springfield. The following case is copied from it, and will illustrate the author's plan of treatment in this disease.]

October 6th, 1836. I was called to visit a robust and ruddy child two years and a half old, with the symptoms of the advanced stage of

croup. I learned that the child had for some weeks been the subject of a common cold. Nine days ago the cough became hard and ringing—the respiration sibilous. To these were added constitutional symptoms—flushed cheeks—harsh and dry skin—the heat was and had been variable, but always above the temperature of health. The disease from its access had been modified by the judicious management of the parents. Mild emetics and purges had been given, and various domestic remedies employed both externally and internally. There was not much alarm until two days ago—the seventh since croupy symptoms were manifested. On the evening of the eighth day all the symptoms had become so urgent that a neighboring practitioner was called in, who, apprehending the formation of membrane, pronounced it too late to bleed. He gave a powerful emetic, which procured free vomiting of a thick, glairy fluid. The parents thought that fine shreds and patches were also dislodged.

When I saw the child, on the morning of the ninth day, a partial remission had taken place—I did not make any minutes of the symptoms at the time. The characteristic respiration, cough, and voice of croup were present. The paroxysms returned by afternoon. The patient was then in great distress from the difficulty in respiration and the constant suffocating cough. The face was deeply suffused—plum colored. The eyes watery. Patches and shreds of whitish membrane were expectorated or rejected by vomiting. The pulse was hard and frequent—the heat of the skin not much above natural.

I opened the jugular vein and bled to approaching syncope. As the ingesta had been thoroughly evacuated I directed once in four hours the following powder: Sub. mur. hyd., grs. ii.; P. ipecac., grs. ii. Half ounce of castor oil in the intervals until evacuations of the bowels were procured. If the stomach perseveringly rejected the oil, or if a movement of the bowels was long delayed, a mild but full injection was to be administered. An embrocation to the throat of equal parts of table oil, camphor spirit and laudanum. To be applied warm, and warmth preserved by a cravat of cotton batting. Blister to the spine from the fifth cervical to the last dorsal vertebra. Stimulating applications to the feet. An equable diffusion of warmth by warm and dry flannels, &c.

Before I left the patient, the more urgent symptoms had been relieved.

10th. Vomiting of glairy matters followed the exhibition of each powder. No well-marked paroxysm had occurred since the bleeding yesterday. The heat had somewhat increased; the pulse was more full and free. Bowels had not been opened.

The same means to be continued. Injection to be repeated if necessary to procure evacuations before noon.

11th. The child is better, though there have been several paroxysms. The tongue has somewhat improved. Cough and breathing less difficult. The countenance has lost much of its purple hue. The face is flushed. The heat higher than it was at first. Pulse about the same as yesterday. The stomach and bowels have been several times evacuated since yesterday morning. Shreds of membrane have been expectorated. Directed 1-12th of a grain of tart. antimony in solution to be given once

in six hours, alternating with the powders of ipecac and calomel. Castor oil to be continued once in six hours, a few drops of oil of turpentine to be added to the dose of oil.

12th. Improvement in all the symptoms since yesterday. In connection with the opiated embrocation a mild mercurial ointment was directed to be applied to the throat thrice daily.

The amendment subsequently was gradual and progressive. The paroxysms were less frequent and less severe, generally terminating by the expectoration of a patch of membrane. The bowels were more obedient and the secretions natural. After the general excitement had somewhat declined, the continuance of the cough and a degree of general irritability seemed to call for the use of opium internally. I have found, in other cases, that a degree of irritability often supervened on the acute disease, even when we were so fortunate as to prevent the formation of membrane. Some would perhaps attribute this to disproportionate general bleedings. Yet this would not constitute a valid argument against bold measures, for they are incomparably the safest. In this stage and form of the disease we must place our entire reliance on antispasmodics.*

Though this state of irritability is attended with very much the same local symptoms as inflammation, the constitutional symptoms will in this stage serve to distinguish it, and point out the appropriate plan of treatment. The pulse and the heat of the skin indicate debility rather than excitement. The tongue is sometimes of a deep scarlet color. It would be a fatal mistake to resort to depletion under these circumstances; without doubt the croupy cough and difficult respiration are often enhanced by the untimely repetition of venesection. We might adduce cases from our own observation and that of others in support of this opinion. Perhaps in no disease do the symptoms which denote inflammation and irritation so completely simulate each other, as in this. The reason is obvious. The local symptoms in either case depend on the same cause—the spasmodic affection of the larynx.

It occasionally happens that depletion is promptly and copiously employed early in the disease and even twice repeated. Yet the physician is perplexed at the obstinacy of the symptoms, which are rather aggravated than abated. There are no appearances of the formation of membrane, but the cough continues shrill and ringing, and the respiration irregular. The exacerbations are frequent and irregular. In such a case we would discriminate carefully between irritability and inflammation.

ALLEGED ERRORS IN THACHER'S DISPENSATORY.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Dear Sir,—On the perusal of the Medical and Surgical Journal for March 28, my attention was arrested by a letter from Dr. S. W. Wil-

* The opium may be advantageously combined, in the form of a tincture, with the antimonial solution. The antimony, by making an impression, seems to prepare the way for the opium and to give a permanency to its effects. Thus through the aid of the antimony, smaller and less frequent doses of opium may be made to answer the purpose.

liams, accompanied by one from the venerable Dr. O. Partridge, relative to errors in my Dispensatory. It seems that they were committed many years ago, when the distinctive terms of our indigenous plants were less regarded than at the present improved period; and the gentlemen, above referred to, must have restricted their knowledge to the earlier editions of the New Dispensatory—for in the 4th edition no mention is made of crow-foot (the article complained of), and the geranium maculatum there appears in its genuine botanical terms according to Dr. Bigelow.

With respect to the cow-parsnip, the phraseology applied appears to be erroneous in part, through the fault of Dr. Orn or myself. Dr. Williams expresses a wish that Dr. Bigelow, or some other eminent botanist, would settle the point in your Journal; but the fact is, that Dr. Bigelow, in his excellent treatise on the Plants of Boston and its Vicinity, has decided that point, and terms it *heracleum lanatum* (cow-parsnip), and gives a particular description of it in botanical terms.

Since my recollection, our indigenous plants were chiefly known by their trivial names, little regard being had to synonyms; and, indeed, they were so seldom brought into use that technicals were scarcely deemed requisite. I hope it is not reserved for our worthy veteran, Dr. Partridge, to detect more errors of my sinning that have not been atoned for.

I am, most respectfully, your obt. servt. JAMES THACHER.

Plymouth, March 31, 1838.

A BONY SUBSTANCE FOUND IN THE HEART.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—The following singular appearance was discovered, the other day, on making the post-mortem examination of the body of a soldier of the Royal Quebec Volunteers—a tall, muscular man, of intemperate habits, who died of acute pneumonia after nine days' illness, aged 31. The immediate cause of death was found to be extensive inflammation of the middle and posterior lobes of the right lung.

On opening the pericardium the heart was found in a state of hypertrophy. At the apex of the left ventricle was discovered a *bony substance firmly impacted in the muscular structure, and resembling, in shape and size, an os hyoides.* No ossification or hardness was met with in the mitral or semilunar valves, or in any other part of the heart. All the cavities contained polypi or coagula adhering to the columnæ carneæ, and extending into the great vessels. Great irregularity, with occasional intermission of the pulse, had been remarked during the illness of the deceased.

I find that Dr. Baillie, in his work on morbid anatomy, states that "a portion of the heart has been observed to be converted into bone.—*Morgagni Epist.* xxvii. *art.* 6. Earthy matter has also been found deposited in the muscular substance of the heart.—*Bounetus*, tom. i., p. 820. Neither of these appearances has come under my own observation,

and they are to be both looked upon as very uncommon."—*Baillie*, by *Wardrop*, Vol. II., p. 39—Lon. Ed.

Respectfully yours, GEO. M. DOUGLAS, M.D.
Quebec, March 21st, 1838. *Assist. Surgeon R. Q. V.*

DEATH BY STEAM.

[A CORRESPONDENT in Maine, whose name and residence are known to the editor, furnishes the following case, which needs no comments from us.]

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Having had the privilege of reading a few numbers of your Journal, and seeing that it is your object to correct and enlighten public opinion upon subjects connected with medical science, I consider it my duty to transmit to you the following article, and thereby lay before the public a case that took place a few days since, and ended fatally with the patient, who was then under the management of one among the many deluded followers of Thomson. The patient, with whom I was acquainted, and who lived in the town of P., had been confined in child-bed about three weeks previous to the operation which caused her death, but had so nearly recovered that she went from room to room, and eat with the family. The only difficulty, and one which I believe is nothing uncommon in such cases, was that she had rather a poor appetite, and was at times troubled with costiveness. Taking alarm at this, some of her friends, whose opinions she had always regarded, advised her to adopt the Thomsonian method of treatment, and to submit to the operation of taking a "patent sweat." She consented, believing, no doubt, that it would be for her good. They accordingly sent for a woman, who makes pretensions of having great success in such cases, to carry her through the operation. She began, as usual, by administering internal and external stimulants, gradually increasing the heat of the patient, till she was in the most severe distress; and notwithstanding her *groans*, which could be heard in the road, they blindly persisted till she breathed her last. A few moments before she died, the regularly-attending physician called at the house, expecting to find her comfortable, and doing well, as when he last saw her; but when he entered the room (which, by the way, he was not allowed to do till her attendants saw that she had gone) there he beheld her, a *lifeless corpse*. He did everything in his power to restore her to life, but it was too late. The body was so heated that the hand could scarcely be borne upon it, a few moments after death.

This case, which I have imperfectly, though correctly, stated, took place in my own town; the woman was one of the highest respectability, and strongly endeared to her friends, who now have to lament and mourn over her sudden and most deplorable death. Not the least shadow of doubt is entertained as to the cause of her death; it is acknowledged by the friends as well as the foes of this method of treat-

ment, that she died in consequence of the operation—in fact she died before they had completed the process.

And now, in reflecting upon this melancholy accident, which, from the fact that it took place within my own knowledge, has particularly awakened my feelings, I cannot but be filled with astonishment, that in this enlightened age any one can be so deluded. But such is the case, and many there are who suffer themselves to be blinded and duped by the boasting and absurd pretensions of modern quackery. But such ignorance and absurdity cannot long conceal itself; and we may hope and believe the day is not far distant when *this* system, which originated in ignorance and which is disseminated generally among the ignorant, will be buried deep and forever, and the true principles, those that have been the result of labor, investigation, and research, will be adopted and maintained by every individual. L. D'M. S.

ABSENCE OF THE MEATUS AUDITORIUS EXTERNUS OF BOTH EARS.

FROM PROF. MUSSEY'S CASES AND OBSERVATIONS.

The left auricle of the patient was smaller than the average size, and its several ridges and pits were not quite fully developed. The right auricle was scarcely half as large as the other, and was very imperfect in its form. In neither of them was there a vestige of an opening or passage of the external ear. There was not even a decided indentation, corresponding with the entrance of the ordinary orifice, of the meatus externus, but the whole was sealed up, and made smooth and firm by the common integument. From the best examination that could be made, it was concluded that there was nothing probably like an occult canal between the integuments and tympanum. The sense of hearing was too obtuse for low conversation, and yet it was sufficiently good to enable the patient to prosecute his business (that of a bookseller) without material inconvenience. The ears and the power of hearing had been in the same state since the earliest recollection of the patient, and, according to the assurances of his parents, from the first period of infancy. From several experiments made in this case, it appeared that an open or shut mouth and nose had no influence whatever upon the power of hearing. He could hear with equal readiness when the lips and nose were closed and pressed together by the fingers of assistants, as when both were wide open. A bent probe was attempted to be passed into the eustachian tube; but although its extremity was arrested, as by a pit or fossa, it could not be passed as usual up towards the internal ear. It seemed probable that the eustachian tube, if its guttural orifice existed, had no communication with the cavity of the tympanum, from no improvement taking place when the mouth and nose remained open.

The hearing was equally good upon the right and left side of the head, and a sound coming from behind was quite as readily appreciated as one coming from a position in front or on either side. The head being cov-

ered with successive layers of cloth, the hearing was found to be decidedly obscured by the application of a single layer, and by each of the others in proportion. A few layers only were sufficient to deafen him to almost the loudest articulations which could be made. Covering the face, with the ears exposed, evidently obscured the hearing, with the mouth and nose opened or closed. But covering the hairy scalp, except a small portion at the anterior and upper part, leaving the face and ears bare, depressed the hearing in a marked degree. The sound of the voice being conveyed through a stick held in the mouth, the opposite end of which was applied, in succession, to different parts of the head and face, it was found that the part over the mastoid process conducted sound the most readily.

It is evident that in this case the integuments of the face and scalp are capable of receiving acoustic impressions, from atmospheric waves or vibrations, and transmitting them to the nervous apparatus of hearing. Through what nerves (distributed upon these parts) is this function accomplished? Mr. Swan (in the eleventh volume of the London Medico-Chirurgical Society's Transactions for 1820) suggests that the facial nerve, or portio dura, may assume the vicarious offices of audition, taking the office of the auditory nerve. In the present case, however, the distribution of the facial nerve cannot explain the quick susceptibility of nearly the whole scalp to auditory impressions. It can hardly admit of a doubt that those nerves derived from the spinal cord below the occipital hole, and reflected in profusion upon the scalp, are concerned in this uncommon function; while the branches of the fifth pair are probably the seat of the peculiar faculty on the face.

Query,—Can any practical benefit be obtained by eliciting this supposed vicarious and dormant energy of the nerves of the face and scalp, and turning it to good account in cases of deafness connected with casual disease of the external meatus or tympanum? The subject presents points of interest, which it is to be hoped will excite further inquiry and attention.—*Amer. Jour. Med. Sciences.*

STATISTICS OF THE CLINICAL HOSPITAL OF MIDWIFERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

The number of cases which occurred between the 1st of October 1829, and the 31st of December, 1835, was 2656. Of these births 2035 were single; 21 were twin births; so that the number of children born was 2077. The number of children born before the full period of gestation was 32, and the sexes were distributed in the following proportions: Males, 1061; females, 1000; sex undetermined, 16. Of the mothers, 38 died in child-bed. 1913 children were born alive; 132 were born dead, and of the former 92 died within the first three weeks of their existence.

It is a remarkable fact that of the children born in the hospital, only 1 in 30 were born dead; while of those born of mothers, treated by the pupils in their own houses, not less than 1 in 9 were born dead; a proof

of the beneficial influence produced by prompt and efficient medical assistance, &c.

Presentations.—Regular presentation of the vertex, 1911; face presentations, 18; presentation of the forehead, 5; buttocks, 47; knees, 2; feet, 2; irregular presentations, 54.

The labor was perfectly natural in 1711 cases; the forceps was employed in 178; extraction of the fœtus in 55. In 4 cases irregular presentations of the child were very considerably improved by external manipulations, and by placing the mother in a commodious posture. In 57 cases turning by the feet, with or without extraction, was had recourse to; and in 5 cases premature labor was brought on by art. Perforation of the head was performed in 6 cases; embryotomy in 2. The Cæsarean operation, before death, in 1 case; after death in 2. Artificial extraction of the placenta was performed in 47 cases. In 57 artificial rupture of the membranes was thought necessary; and, finally, in three cases, abnormal conformation of the external parts rendered it necessary to divide the labia.

The following are some of the most remarkable circumstances connected with the art of midwifery, which occurred:—

Two of the patients were subject to habitual attacks of epilepsy. In the first case the disease was suspended during the first 4 1-2 months of pregnancy; the accesses then returned, and continued in a very severe degree to the end of pregnancy. The labor, however, proceeded in the natural way, and the patient became speedily convalescent. In the second case the accesses were suspended during the whole course of pregnancy, and the labor was an easy one. Professor Busch assures us that, during his practice, he saw only a single case in which the epileptic attack came on during labor.

Rheumatism of the uterus occurred in several cases, but yielded to the appropriate treatment, without rendering it necessary to produce premature labor.

Menstruation during pregnancy.—This occurred once, twice, or even thrice during pregnancy, without affecting it in any pernicious manner. In two cases menstruation had not existed before conception, but set in, for the first time, after the women became pregnant.

Cholera.—In one case the woman was seized with this disease, and died in fifteen hours after the commencement of the attack. The motions of the child were felt ten hours previously to the mother's death. The Cæsarean operation was performed immediately, but the child was dead also.

Duration of Labor.—The longest labor continued for six days and six hours, and then terminated happily without the interference of art. In 30 cases labor was prolonged for three days and more without any injury to mother or child. The shortest labor terminated in 39 minutes.

Imperfect action of the uterus was very frequently observed in all these cases. The powder of the secale cornutum was administered in doses of ten grains every ten or fifteen minutes. Of 175 cases in which it was given, its action on the uterus was manifest in 115. The ergot did not seem to exercise any unfavorable influence on the child,

for, of 177 cases, only one was observed in which the death of the child could be traced to it as a cause.

Convulsions and Eclampsia.—These were observed in 11 cases; 6 were examples of true eclampsia; 5 of simple, though very severe convulsions. Of the former six, four patients died.—*Kleinert's Repert.*

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, APRIL 11, 1838.

AVON SPRINGS, NEW YORK.

The hydro-sulphurous waters of this place exercise a powerful influence over chronic diseases, by their action as a stimulant to the organs of secretion; they are useful as cathartic, diaphoretic or diuretic, as they are given in a quantity to act upon the alimentary canal, the skin or the kidneys. According to Dr. J. W. Francis, of New York, "they constitute a very efficient alterative, and, as their tonic properties are the result of their general action upon all the emunctories of the body, we may claim for them properties which are denied to the whole class of tonics and stimulants, strictly so called, and the mischief invariably induced by these last named articles, wherever local congestion exists, will be entirely guarded against by the Avon waters." Experience has also shown that, by means of their stimulant power, their action upon the uterine system is remarkably beneficial, and they possess many advantages over chalybeates in cases of a deficiency or disordered state of the catamenia.

The happy effects of these waters in rheumatism, scrofula, and diseases of the skin, have long attracted public attention, and a great number of sufferers, from these distressing maladies, have been annually relieved, or entirely cured there. They have also been successfully administered in cases of gout, as a palliative of the intensity and frequency of its attacks; in many diseases of the digestive organs, as chronic hepatitis, certain affections of the stomach and bowels, characterized by vomiting or cardialgia, dyspepsia and atonic diarrhœa; in some diseases of the urinary organs, particularly catarrh of the bladder, chronic nephritic calculi, and the lithic diathesis; in the incipient stage of glandular and visceral tumors; in some cases of catarrh and asthma, and in irregularities of the menses and leucorrhœa.

From the above account of the modus operandi of these medicinal springs, the physician will be able to designate such cases as would probably receive benefit there.

An infirmary has recently been established in the immediate vicinity of the springs, by a physician of considerable reputation, where the various conveniences for bathing, as douches, vapor baths, &c., and the requisite medical attendance, are provided for those cases in which it would be inexpedient or impracticable for the patients to visit the bathing houses at the springs.

A New Muscle of the Eye.—About a year since, as nearly as we can recollect, Dr. Wallace, of New York, had a short notice in the Ameri-

can Journal of Science, announcing the interesting fact that he had discovered a muscle *within the globe of a fish's eye*, by which the lens was controlled, which was to explain how the organ was adapted to long and short distances: in short, the inference was that all the mystery which had heretofore baffled physiologists in their attempts to demonstrate how the focus of the eye was changed, could now be cleared up without difficulty. After waiting a reasonable period without being satisfied that any such discovery was made, from anything which the author of the paragraph alluded to has since given to the scientific world, we now respectfully desire to know whether he was self-deceived, or whether something is in preparation, calculated to upturn all the old theories on the subject of vision. In the meanwhile, those gentlemen who have good microscopes, will find a rich harvest for philosophical observation, as the spring opens, in viewing the compound eyes of caterpillars. Apparently, the optic nerve of each eye, of which there are eight on each side of the head, unite into one single thread. Now the point to decide is this —do the nerves of each eye communicate singly with the brain, or not?

Amputations.—One of our exchange Journals (the Southern) gives us a smart lecture for presuming to advance the idea, some months ago, that a treatise on amputations is wanted in this country. Certainly no one could suspect us of selfishness in this; and it is truly surprising that any one should object to having the profession put in possession of the surgical opinions and experience of the best surgeons in the Union. Instead of circumscribing the art, and raising a barrier against improvement, it would, we think, conduce most effectually to that species of improvement, which, above all others, is most desirable, viz., a more successful mode of lessening human suffering. Our Georgia friend certainly has our permission to cut off limbs as he chooses; but we nevertheless believe that no man in the world would hail with more pleasure than himself, just such a work as we still insist is a desideratum in the United States.

Hospital Erysipelas.—In nearly all the hospitals in which the law of cleanliness requires that the floors of the wards, occupied by the sick, shall be frequently washed, erysipelas seems not only to have been speedily generated, but also, after its first development, to be always present, and continually showing itself on patient after patient where it was least expected. As its origin has been generally referred to the period when frequent floor-washings were considered necessary, or, rather, when the greatest amount of surface had been thus habitually wetted for a considerable time, why would it not be well to cover the floors of hospitals with painted carpets, such as are manufactured at Roxbury, of any size, which might be taken out daily to be washed, and, when thoroughly dried, returned again and re-spread over the floor? The experiment seems to promise well in two respects, viz. the annoyance of floor-cleansing would be done away with, and the now supposed cause of erysipelas, from the evaporation of water, holding filth of some kind, perhaps, in solution, would certainly be obviated.

Dr. Little on the Eye.—The flattering notice taken of a manual of the Diseases of the Eye, by S. Little, M.D., of Philadelphia, in the British

and Foreign Medical Review, must be gratifying to the author. We always feel a degree of pride in these acknowledgments from abroad, because it is an evidence that the science and the facts of America are equal in value to the science and facts of the mother country, and that those who confessedly influence the public opinion through the periodicals which they control, manifest a disposition to present the best specimens, to their transatlantic readers, of the medical writers of the United States.

Louisville Medical Institute.—A personal acquaintance, a gentleman on whom we can rely, writes as follows from Louisville, Ky.

"My Dear Doctor—Enclosed I send you some account of the medical graduates of the new Louisville Medical School. The number, twenty-four, is proof of the remarkable success of this institution. It began with happy auspices; the city appropriated $90,000 for the buildings, apparatus, library, &c. The best professors that could be obtained, by the great inducements of the school and plan, were brought here; and the prosperity of the school has answered the most sanguine expectations of its friends. There were eighty students during the course—a number perhaps unheard of, in America, at the first year of any other medical school.

"We cannot but feel how much this reputation and prosperity is due to your townsman, Dr. J. B. Flint, the professor of surgery, who, though the youngest, now stands acknowledged the head of the school. He now goes to Europe with the funds for the purchase of books and apparatus. With these and with the increased experience of the teachers, it is determined to make this the first medical school west of the Alleganies; and, without any derogation to the others, there is no doubt they will accomplish their object.

"When time and opportunity favor, I will give you some account of the other medical schools in the Valley of the Mississippi.

Louisville, Ky., March 3, 1838. Till then, truly yours, J."

Cupping Instruments.—Mr. Thomas P. Codman, an ingenious mechanic of Roxbury, manufactures a beautiful instrument for cupping. It is quite portable, and not particularly liable to get out of order—a matter of importance to a country practitioner, who cannot avail himself of new instruments the moment they may be wanted. Mr. Codman calls this the *pocket cupping instrument*, because he has constructed the glass part of it with reference to being carried in the pocket. The cylinder is made of Brittania, the piston of brass, and the workmanship is perfectly neat and convenient. A specimen may be seen at the counting room of this office. Hereafter, all the different sizes are to be on sale at C. White's, druggist, Washington Street.

Medical Miscellany.—Dr. Marcellus Bowen, accused of the embezzlement of money belonging to the Lafayette bank, Boston, has been acquitted by a jury.—A case of death from a rigid adherence to abstemious diet occurred in this city last week. Insanity was exhibited during the last few days. The particulars of the case should be reported.—The summer course of lectures in the Medical Institute of Philadelphia, commenced the first Monday of April. Price of tickets only seven dollars.

To Correspondents.—Dr. Ware's communication, a notice of Dr. Meigs's Philadelphia System of Midwifery, &c., will have place next week. We have also received our exchange file of the India Journal of Medicine, and the India Review, from Dr. Corbyn, by an arrival at this port on Saturday.

Whole number of deaths in Boston, for the week ending April 7, 32. Males, 18—Females, 14.

Consumption, 3—dropsy in the head, 1—hooping cough, 2—inflammation of the brain, 1—measles, 1—throat distemper, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 1—infantile, 2—lung fever, 2—accidental, 1—concussion of the brain, 1—abscess, 2—dropsy, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—marasmus, 2—old age, 1 burn, 1—erysipelas, 1—liver complaint, 1—child-bed, 1.

MEDICAL INSTRUCTION.

The subscribers are associated for the purpose of giving a complete course of medical instruction, and will receive pupils on the following terms:

The pupils will be admitted to the practice of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and will receive clinical lectures on the cases they witness there. Instruction, by lectures or examinations, will be given in the intervals of the public lectures, every week day.

On Midwifery, and the Diseases of Women and Children, and on Chemistry, by Dr. Channing.
On Physiology, Pathology, Therapeutics, and Materia Medica, " Dr. Ware.
On the Principles and Practice of Surgery, " Dr. Otis.
On Anatomy, " Dr. Lewis.

The students are provided with a room in Dr. Lewis's house, where they have access to a large library. Lights and fuel without any charge. The opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of Anatomy are not inferior to any in the country.

The fees are $100—to be paid in advance. No credit given, except on sufficient security of some person in Boston, nor for a longer period than six months.

Applications are to be made to Dr. Walter Channing, Tremont Street, opposite the Tremont House, Boston.

WALTER CHANNING,
JOHN WARE,
GEORGE W. OTIS, JR.
WINSLOW LEWIS, JR.

Oct. 18—tf

DR. LEWIS requests those who have books belonging to him, to return them immediately at his residence, No. 80 Boylston Street. 4t—A4

CAPSULES OF COPAIBA.

M. A. Mothes, of Paris, has lately invented, and now offers to the medical faculty, a method of administering the Balsam of Copaiba without taste or smell.

The pure balsam is enclosed in capsules of gelatin, which completely cover its taste and flavor, so that they may be swallowed with as much ease as any nice confection. They each contain eighteen grains of the balsam, so that the dose can be measured with great ease; they dissolve readily in the stomach, and are sure not to pass off by the intestinal canal, as is almost always the case with the solidified copaiba. These capsules are highly commended by the medical journals of Paris, and M. Mothes has the favorable testimonials of Drs. Segalis, Rostan, Ricort, Desruelles, Cullerier; Baron Alibert, MM. Lisfranc & Marjolin, who daily prescribe them, and who, in their lectures, have given the highest praise to his preparation. They are neatly put up in oval paper boxes, containing thirty-six, and are sold in Boston by the importer's agent, THEODORE METCALF,

4t—M 28 Apothecary, *No.* 33 *Tremont Row.*

VACCINE VIRUS.

Physicians in any section of the United States can procure ten quills charged with Pure Vaccine Virus by return mail, on addressing the editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, enclosing one dollar, *post paid*, without which, no letter will be taken from the post office. Oct. 25.

MEDICAL INSTRUCTION.

The subscribers have associated for the purpose of giving medical instruction. A convenient room has been provided for this purpose, which will be open to the students at all hours. They will have access to an extensive medical library, and every other necessary facility for the acquirement of a thorough medical education.

Opportunities will be offered for the observation of diseases and their treatment in *two* Dispensary districts, embracing Wards 1, 2 and 3, and in *cases which will be treated at the room daily.*

Instruction will be given by clinical and other lectures, and by examinations at least twice a week.

Sufficient attention will be paid to Practical Anatomy.

For further information, application may be made at the room, over 103 Hanover street, or to the subscribers.

EPHRAIM BUCK, M.D.
ASA B. SNOW, M.D.
E. WALTER LEACH, M.D.
HENRY G. CLARK, M.D.
JOSEPH MORIARTY, M.D.

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